



Wildland Fire Suppression Media Guide



2011

QUICK REFERENCES

To Report a Wildland Fire Call: 911 or 1-800-237-3633 (AICC)

AK Interagency Coordination Center (AICC): <http://fire.ak.blm.gov>

AICC General Email Contact: blm_afs_pio@blm.gov

Fire Information: (907) 356-5511

Information~Definitions

Resources~Agencies

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The purpose of this guide is to:

- Provide the media with a basic understanding of wildland fire suppression in Alaska
- Provide direction for current fire information inquiries and incident news
- Familiarize the media with firefighting resources and planning
- Define terminology that is frequently used within the fire community

An essential element of Alaska wildland fire management is interagency cooperation and collaboration. The Alaska interagency relationship offers the opportunity for Federal, State and Alaska Native organizations to collaborate and provide for public safety, accomplish fire-related management objectives and maintain healthy ecosystems while each partner agency adheres to agency-specific rules and regulations that support their agency's mission. Each agency's role and responsibilities contribute to the success of interagency wildland fire and fuels management; interagency agreements identify and define agency roles.

Helpful Information Sources

To Report A Wildland Fire Call 911 or 1-800-237-3633 (AICC)

GENERAL INQUIRY:

- Fire Information: (907) 356-5511
- General Email: blm_afs_pio@blm.gov

WEBSITES:

- Alaska Interagency Coordination Center (AICC): <http://fire.ak.blm.gov>
- AICC Morning Highlights: <http://fire.ak.blm.gov/content/news/highlights/current.pdf>
- Map of Fire Locations: <http://fire.ak.blm.gov/predsvcs/maps.php>
- Incident Information: <http://inciweb.org>
- National Fire Situation: http://www.nifc.gov/fireInfo/fireInfo_main.html
- National Home and Property Preparation for Wildland Fire: <http://firewise.org/>
- Alaska Wildland Fire Coordinating Group (AWFCG) Brochures/Educational Materials: <http://fire.ak.blm.gov/administration/awfcg.php>
- Interagency Standards for Fire & Aviation Operations: http://www.nifc.gov/policies/pol_ref_redbook_2011.html

Photo: At the AK Preparedness Level (PL) 4, the AK Interagency Coordination Center Manager activates an Interagency Fire Information Center (also referred to as a Joint Information Center (JIC)). **What is PL 4?** Multiple units experiencing fire starts and/or 2 project fires. Probability of ignition is high and burning conditions are high to extreme in all fuel types. Resistance to control is high to extreme and resistance to extinguishment is high. *Current PL is found at the top of the AICC Situation Report.*

JIC

Helpful Sources Continued

WEBSITES:

- Department of Transportation (Road Closure Info): <http://511.alaska.gov/>
- National Weather Service: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/>
- FAA Temporary Flight Restriction Information: <http://tfr.faa.gov/tfr2/list.html>
- AK Division of Forestry (Including Burn Permit Info): <http://forestry.alaska.gov>
- BLM Alaska Fire Service: <http://fire.ak.blm.gov/afs/>
- National Parks Service: <http://www.nps.gov/akso/Fire/firehome.htm>
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife: <http://www.fws.gov/fire/>
- USDA Forest Service: <http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/>
- AK Dept. of Fish and Game: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=ecosystems.fire>
- Anchorage Fire Department: www.muni.org/fire

Follow:

- National Park Service on Twitter: [AlaskaNPS](#)
- Alaska Division of Forestry on Twitter: [AK_Forestry](#)
- Alaska Division of Forestry on Facebook: [Alaska DNR- Division of Forestry \(DOF\)](#)



Frequently Asked Questions

http://www.dec.state.ak.us/air/smoke_qa.htm

Wildland Fire Smoke

WEBSITES:

- AK Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)- Smoke:
<http://www.dec.state.ak.us/air/am/smoke.htm>
- DEC Air Quality Advisories/Alerts:
<https://myalaska.state.ak.us/dec/air/airtoolsweb/AirOnlineServices.aspx>
- Fairbanks North Star Borough Smoke Visibility/ Air Quality Index:
<http://co.fairbanks.ak.us/airquality/>
<http://co.fairbanks.ak.us/airquality/Docs/ParticulateLevels.pdf>

Consult Medical Professionals Regarding Personal Health Concerns

SMOKE

Smoke Visiblility & Air Quality Index ~ PM-2.5 Particulate

Smoke Visibility in Miles	Air Quality Index Categories	Air Quality Index Cautionary Statements	One Hour Particulate Levels	24 Hour Particulate Levels
10 miles & up	Good	None	0 - 40	0.0 to 15.4
6 to 9	Moderate	Unusually sensitive people should consider reducing prolonged or heavy exertion.	41 - 80	15.5 to 35.4
3 to 5	Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	People with respiratory or heart disease, the elderly and children should limit prolonged exertion.	81 - 175	35.5 to 55.4
1 1/2 to 2 1/2	Unhealthy	People with respiratory or heart disease, the elderly and children should avoid prolonged exertion; everyone else should limit prolonged exertion.	176 - 300	55.5 to 150.4
3/4 to 1 1/2	Very Unhealthy	People with respiratory or heart disease, the elderly and children should avoid any outdoor activity; everyone else should avoid prolonged exertion.	301 - 500	150.5 to 250.4
3/4 mile or less	Hazardous	Everyone should avoid any outdoor exertion; people with respiratory or heart disease, the elderly and children should remain indoors.	over 500	Greater Than 250.5

To help get a better estimate:

1. Face away from the sun.
2. Determine the limit of your visible range by looking for targets at known distances (miles).
3. Visible range is that point at which even high contrast objects totally disappear.

Wildland Fire Smoke

Media Visiting a Wildland Fire Incident

1. **FOR YOUR SAFETY**, contact the Incident Public Information Officer or Agency Public Affairs and let them know of your intention to visit.
2. You must be in good physical condition and are required to have the right personal protective equipment (PPE):

Recommendations for PPE at an Incident Base:

- Lace-up shoes with non-slip soles and heels
- Long pants and long-sleeve shirt

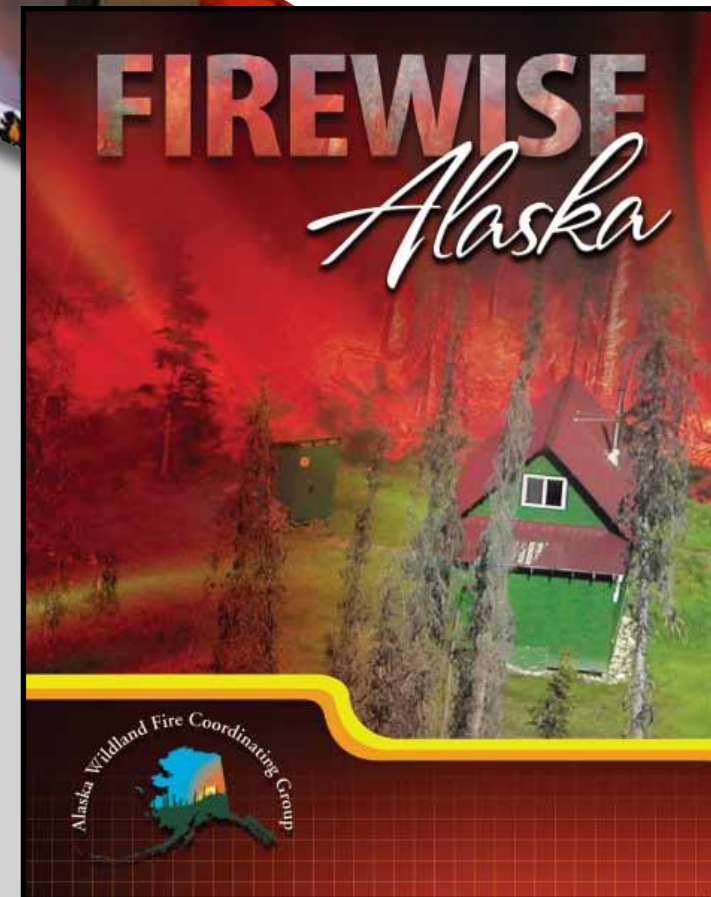
Minimum required PPE for fireline visits:

- 8-inch high, lace up leather work boots with non-slip, Vibram-type, melt-resistant soles.
- Yellow Nomex shirt and Nomex pants*
- Hard hat with chin strap*
- Leather gloves*
- Fire shelter*
- Hand tool (to be determined by escort)*
- Water canteen*

**There is a possibility you can get this PPE item at the incident, but please bring your own if you have it.*

Key Points

- Firefighter and public **safety** is the first priority.
- Alaskans are responsible, through individual efforts and community programs, to reduce the threat of wildland fire to their homes and property. **FireWise Alaska** provides a guide for home and property owners: <http://forestry.alaska.gov/pdfs/firewise09.pdf>
- Nearly 70% of wildland fires in Alaska are human-caused and therefore, preventable!
- Fire management planning, preparedness, suppression operations, prescribed fire, and other related activities are coordinated on an interagency basis with involvement from State, Federal, local governments and Alaska Native entities.
- Lightning-caused, wildland fires are a natural process in Alaska.
- Managing wildland fire in Alaska balances risks and benefits in an ever changing environment.





Suppression Resources Include:

Smokejumpers The initial response force that travels to fire by aircraft and parachute.

Crews:

- Hotshot

Highly trained 20-person crews that are used mainly to build fireline by hand and are a national resource.

*All Hotshot Crews are Type 1 Crews, not all Type 1 Crews are Hotshots.

- Type 1

Highly trained 20-person crews that are used mainly to build fireline by hand.

- Type 2

- **Agency** 20-person crews that are used primarily for fireline construction and mop-up after a fire.

- **EFF** Alaska has designated approximately 70 Emergency Firefighter Crews that are hired, as needed, in groups of 16 people for in-state assignments. For out-of-state assignments they are 20-person crews.

Fire Specialists Individual firefighters that are highly trained and provide aviation support, incident leadership and fuel management services.

Engines Vehicles that are equipped with water, pumps, hose, and other fire suppression tools.

Aircraft Aircraft used to support detection and firefighting operations include air tankers, smaller fixed-wing aircraft, and helicopters.

Alaska Interagency Coordination Center

- The Alaska Interagency Coordination Center (AICC), based on Fort Wainwright, is one of 11 Geographic Area Coordination Centers (GACC) located throughout the United States, see map.
- AICC operates on a Federal and State interagency basis.
- AICC serves as the focal point for initial attack resource coordination; logistical support and resource mobilization (including aircraft, personnel, equipment and crews); and predictive services.
- Cooperating agencies include: Bureau of Land Management, State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Fish and Wildlife Service.



<http://fire.ak.blm.gov>

PROTECTION AREAS

JURISDICTIONAL AGENCIES

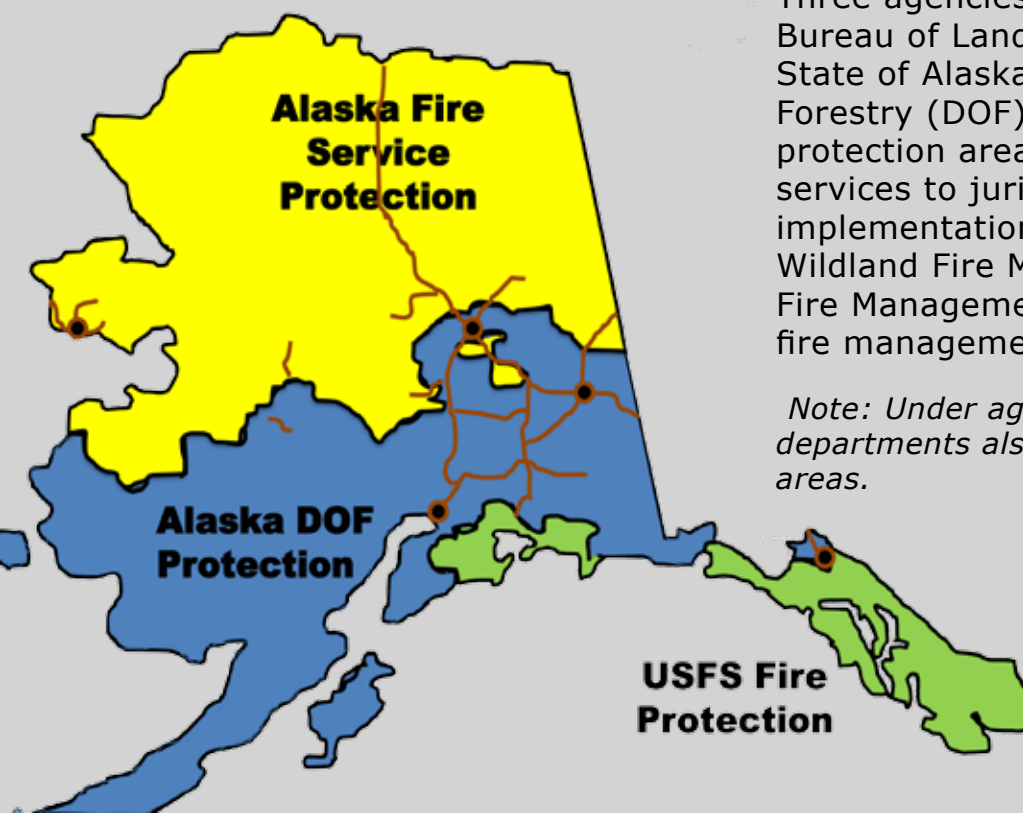
The Federal, State, and Alaska Native jurisdictional agencies (land management agencies) have the overall planning and management decision responsibility for their lands.

PROTECTION AGENCIES

Three agencies provide wildland fire suppression services: The Bureau of Land Management-Alaska Fire Service (AFS), the State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources-Division of Forestry (DOF), and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). Within their protection area, these agencies provide wildland fire suppression services to jurisdictional agencies and are the lead agencies for implementation of actions directed by the Alaska Interagency Wildland Fire Management Plan, the Statewide Master Cooperative Fire Management Agreement, jurisdictional agency land use and fire management plans, and incident decision documentation.

Note: Under agreements with the Division of Forestry, cooperating fire departments also provide response to their communities and surrounding areas.

Brown lines on map roughly depict the highway system.





AIWFMP

The Alaska Interagency Wildland Fire Management Plan

- Alaska wildland fire policies and procedures are standardized in the interagency fire management plan.
- Four wildland fire Management Options (Critical, Full, Modified, Limited) are utilized statewide by Federal, State and Alaska Native entities.
- The Management Option categorizations:
 - *Prioritize areas for initial response and ensure human life, designated property and identified resources receive an appropriate level of protection with available firefighting resources*
 - *Optimize the ability to achieve land use and resource management objectives and integrate fire management, mission objectives, land use, and natural resource goals*
 - *Reinforce the premise that the cost of the suppression effort be commensurate with values identified for protection.*

FIRE MANAGEMENT OPTIONS

The Management Options provide a guide for the agencies to prioritize the use of suppression resources. Management Options are defined in the Alaska Interagency Wildland Fire Management Plan and designations are reviewed yearly.

The AIWFMP defines the following Management Options. The designation of a Management Option pre-selects initial strategies for a wildland fire; responses range from immediate suppression actions to periodic surveillance.

Critical (red):

Critical addresses areas and sites where people live and fulfills legal mandates; the objective in the Critical option areas is to protect the area or site from fire.

Full (orange):

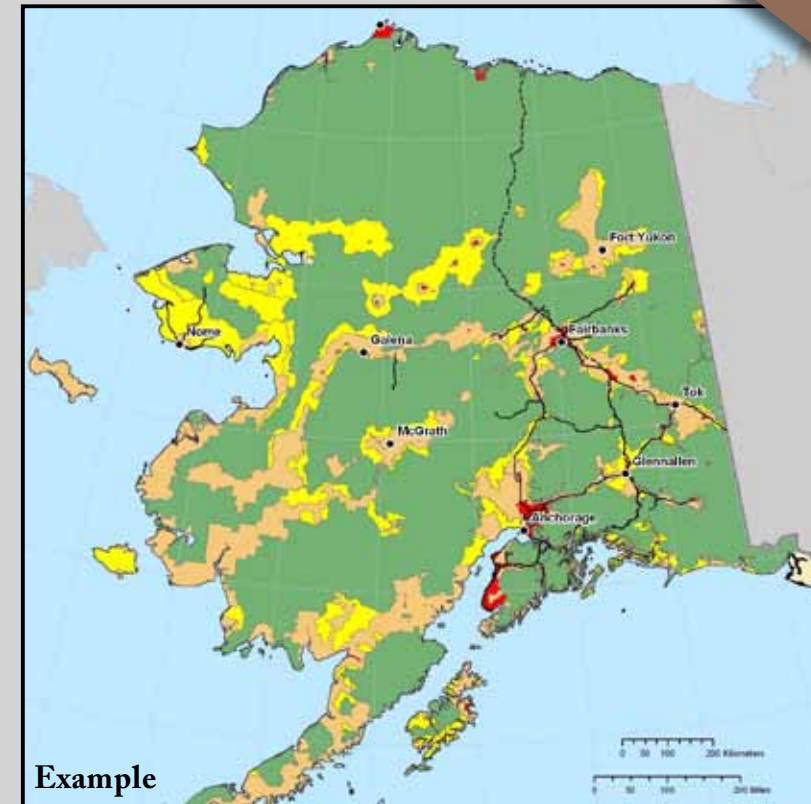
In Full, the objectives include control of all wildland fires at the smallest reasonable size and to protect high value natural resource areas. Native allotments are designated Full or Critical; developed recreation facilities or administrative sites may also be designated Full. Each agency has a structure or site protection policy and it varies between agency.

Modified (yellow):

The Modified option designations afford Jurisdictional Agencies the opportunity to accomplish fire-related land use and resource management objectives when fire and environmental conditions are favorable.

Limited (green):

Limited is designed for broad, landscape-scale areas where the low density and wide distribution of values to be protected best allows for fire to function in its ecological role. Site-specific action may be taken as warranted.



INCIDENT MANAGEMENT



INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM (IMT)

IMTs are pre-established teams that are configured with Command Staff, General Staff, and other leadership and support positions. Alaska has the capacity for both Type 1 and Type 2 IMTs. The Alaska Type 1 IMT is on the national Type 1 IMT rotation list and fills orders not only for wildland fires, but also other emergency situations.

Alaska Type 1 IMT Website:

<http://alaska.imtcenter.net/main/Index.aspx>

INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM (ICS)

A standardized on-scene emergency management concept specifically designed to allow its user(s) to adopt an integrated organizational structure equal to the complexity and demands of single or multiple incidents, without being hindered by jurisdictional boundaries. Wildland Fires are typed by complexity, from Type 5 (least complex) to Type 1 (most complex).

Wildland Fire Terminology

AIR TANKER: Any fixed-wing aircraft used to drop retardant or water on a wildland fire.

ALASKA WILDLAND FIRE COORDINATING GROUP (AWFCG): Group that represents jurisdictional and protecting agencies.

COLD TRAILING: To control a partly dead fire's edge by carefully inspecting and feeling with bare hands for any remaining embers or coals.

CONTAIN FIRE: When firefighters or other resources stop the forward progress of a fire and have put in all control lines.

CROWN FIRE: Any fire that advances from top to top of trees or brush that is more or less independent of the surface fire.

EXTENDED Response: A wildland fire that has not been contained or controlled by initial attack forces and for which more firefighting resources are arriving, en route, or being ordered by the initial attack incident commander.

FIRE BEHAVIOR: The manner in which a wildland fire develops; how fuels ignite, flame development, and fire spread.

FIRELINE: The part of a control line that is scraped or dug down to mineral soil.

FIRE PERIMETER: The entire length of the outer edge of the fire.

HELIBASE: A location within the general incident area for parking, fueling, maintenance, and loading of helicopters.

HOSE LAY: Connecting sections of fire hose together from the fire pump to the fire location with designated sections of line controlled by use of water.

INITIAL ATTACK/ RESPONSE: The resources and personnel first dispatched to a wildland fire incident.

MOP-UP: After the fire has been controlled, all actions required to make the fire "safe", prior to being called out. This includes trenching, falling snags, and checking all control lines.

OVERHEAD: Personnel who are assigned to supervisory positions. This includes incident commander, command staff, directors, supervisors, and unit leaders.

Additional Wildland Fire Terminology:

<http://www.nwcg.gov/pms/pubs/glossary/index.htm> or <http://forestry.alaska.gov/fire/glossary.htm>